

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: DECONTROL AFTER ONE YEAR

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PINS, EGEN, IT

SUBJECT: LAMA APPROVES STATE INTERVENTION WHEN STRIKES DISRUPT
ESSENTIAL SERVICES

REF: ROME 11894

1. SUMMARY: IN A FRONT PAGE INTERVIEW WHICH APPEARED ON AUGUST
24 IN L'UNITA, LUCIANO LAMA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COMMUNIST-
DOMINATED LABOR CONFEDERATION CGIL, CONDEMNED RECENT STRIKES BY
THE AUTONOMOUS RAILWAY UNION FASAFS, THE NEO-FASCIST CISNAL
AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY CUB WHICH HAVE BEEN DISRUPTING RAIL
TRAFFIC DURING THE PEAK AUGUST HOLIDAY SEASON. WHILE CATEGORICALLY
REJECTING ANY LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT
TO STRIKE, LAMA DEFENDED STATE INTERVENTION IN EXCEPTIONAL
CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN NECESSARY TO PRESERVE PUBLIC ORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AN INTERVIEW PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN L'UNITA AND
WIDELY REPORTED IN OTHER PAPERS, CGIL CHIEF LAMA DENOUNCED
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THE RECENT STRIKE ACTIVITY WHICH HAS SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED

PUBLIC TRANSPORT. HE CALLED SUCH ACTION IRRESPONSIBLE: 1) AT A MOMENT WHEN LARGE NUMBERS OF WORKERS AND IN PARTICULAR EMIGRANT WORKERS WERE TRAVELLING; 2) BECAUSE HE DISAGREES WITH THE STRIKE OBJECTIVES (SEE REFTTEL); AND 3) BECAUSE HE SEES THIS ACTIVITY AS AN ATTEMPT TO DIVIDE THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT AND HALT THE TENDENCY OF THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM TO SHIFT TO THE LEFT FOLLOWING THE JUNE ELECTIONS.

3. LAMA SAID THIS SORT OF STRIKE ACITIVITY BY AUTONOMOUS UNIONS WHOSE POWER FREQUENTLY DERIVES FROM THEIR CONTROL OF VITAL SERVICES, IS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE GOI'S 20 YEAR POLICY OF CLIENTISM. QUOTE CLIENTISM HAS ENGENDERED LEGITIMATE RESENTMENT ON THE PART OF SOME GROUPS OF WORKERS, WHO WHILE BEING GIVEN MORE RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE YEARS HAVE NOT RECEIVED ACCEPTABLE (WORK CONDITION AND WAGE) IMPROVEMENTS. UNQUOTE LAMA SAID THESE INEQUITIES, PARTICULARLY WITH REFERENCE TO RAILROAD WORKERS, SHOULD BE CORRECTED.

4. NOTING THAT ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF THE TRANSPORTATION DISRUPTIONS HAS BEEN A REVIVAL OF OLD PROPOSALS FOR IMPOSING LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE RIGHT TO STRIKE WHICH IS GUARANTEED BY ARTICLES 39 AND 40 OF THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTION, LAMA SAID THAT HE WAS RESOLUTELY OPPOSED TO ANY SUCH REGULATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE AFFIRMED THE RIGHT OF SOCIETY TO DEFEND ITSELF. HE CITED THE HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE OF HOSPITAL SURGICAL ATTENDANTS WHO MIGHT GO ON STRIKE, QUOTE CAN WE LET THE PATIENTS DIE? NO* THEREFORE EITHER THE UNIONS MUST RECOGNIZE THE NECESSITY TO GUARANTEE SUCH SERVICES OR IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES IT IS LOGICAL THAT THE STATE INTERVENE. UNQUOTE

5. LAMA ALSO DEALT IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC CRISIS. NOTING A RECENT PREDICTION BY THE ITALIAN CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRY THAT 130,000 JOBS WILL BE LOST DUE TO DECLINING INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY DURING THE JULY-SEPTEMBER QUARTER AND THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SHARP RISE IN UNEMPLOYED YOUTH SEEKING THEIR FIRST JOBS, HE SAID HE APPROVED OF THE GOI PLAN FOR COPING WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS. HE IS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT BUREAUCRATIC INEPTITUDE AND POLITICAL DELAYS WILL IMPEDE ITS APPLICATION. HE REITERATED THAT AS FAR AS THE CGIL IS CONCERNED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS STARTING THIS FALL INVOLVING FOUR AND A HALF MILLION WORKERS IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICES SECTORS WILL CONCENTRATE ON PRESERVING JOBS RATHER THAN ON WAGE GAINS.

6. FINALLY, LAMA REAFFIRMED THE INTENTION OF HIS CONFEDERATION TO PUSH FOR UNIFICATION WITH CISL AND UIL. IN THIS CONTEXT HE APPROVED OF THE RECENT CISL GENERAL COUNCIL DECISION WHICH AVOIDED A SPLIT IN THAT ORGANIZATION AND OF THE UIL CENTRAL

COMMITTEE MEETING WHICH APPARENTLY HEALED SOME OF THE
WOUNDS IN THE SMALLEST OF THE THREE CONFEDERATIONS.

7. COMMENT: LAMA'S OBSERVATIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE
STRATEGY OF THE PCI OF OFFERING SURPRISINGLY MODERATE SOLUTIONS
FOR SAVING ITALY FROM WHAT APPEARS TO BE IMPENDING ECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL CHAOS. WHILE HIS REMARKS MAY SHOCK MANY RANK
AND FILE UNION MEMBERS, THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY DESIGNED TO
GAIN SYMPATHY FROM THOSE WHO SEEK LEFTIST SOLUTIONS FOR
ITALY'S PROBLEMS AS WELL AS MANY OTHERS WHO ARE SIMPLY
FRUSTRATED. VOLPE

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